

XL.—Description of a new Fungus from British Guiana.

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[With a Plate.]

THE singular and beautiful species of which I have now the pleasure of giving a description and figure was kindly transmitted to me by Mr. Bentham. It was gathered in British Guiana by Mr. Schomburgk, who was struck with the curious circumstance that in the driest weather it always contains some water, and in the rainy season is quite full. This is the more remarkable as the specimens when immersed in water are soon saturated with moisture, and when placed in paper become dry in a very short time. How so bibulous a substance can retain any liquid is very difficult to understand, for there is no dense stratum of cells to prevent its percolation, and it is scarcely probable that it can secrete any. I am inclined however to think that the water is prevented from coming into immediate contact with the fungus by the air which is imprisoned by the velvety down which clothes the upper surface; but it is impossible to speak confidently without observing the species in its natural habitat, and unfortunately nothing beyond the simple fact was mentioned by Mr. Schomburgk. There is but one species to which it bears any strong resemblance, viz. *Thelephora infundibuliformis*, Hook., in Kunth, 'Syn.' Unfortunately no specimen remains in Sir W. J. Hooker's herbarium, but the characters "pallide fusca, squamoso-hirsuta," do not accord with our plant. I have therefore given it a specific name denoting the peculiar property indicated by its discoverer.

Stereum hydrophorum, Berk. Pilco infundibuliformi, juniori integro, adulto fisso-crenato zonato ferrugineo velutino, pilis hic illic fasciculatis; stipite brevi concolore subtiliter velutino, hymenio lævi pallidiore.

Hab. On decayed wood, British Guiana.

Pileus $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches broad, 3 inches deep, thin, papyraceo-coriaceous, infundibuliform, at first quite entire, at length crenate and split, but scarcely lobed, ferruginous, repeatedly zoned, especially towards the margin, clothed with short velvety down, which in parts is thicker and fasciculate.

Stem 1 inch high, 2 lines thick, incrassated above, attached by a small disc, minutely velvety, of the same colour as the pileus, solid.

Hymenium smooth, even, paler than the pileus.

In the younger specimen the hymenium is finely zoned as well as the pileus, and in parts there is a slight velvety appearance, which arises either from the hymenium not being completely formed, or from the plant having accidentally been inverted.

PLATE IX. fig. 2. *Stereum hydrophorum*, nat. size.